

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE HISTORY OF ROME. By THEODOR MOMMSEN. Translated, with the author's sanction and additions, by the Rev. WALTER SCOTT, D. D., in two vols. Preface by Dr. J. G. FICHET. New edition, in four volumes, Vols. I. and II. Crown 8vo., pp. 635, 568. Charles Scribner & Co.

The reputation of this work, both in Germany and England, is so well established that it is somewhat surprising we had no earlier reprint of Dr. Dickson's excellent translation, published originally in 1861. Any lengthy criticism would be superfluous. To readers who need to be informed we may say, in the words of Dr. Schmitz, that the work, "though the production of a man of most profound and extensive learning," is not so much designed for the professional scholar as for intelligent readers of all classes." Its distinguishing excellence is the clear and consecutive view which it presents of the character and condition of the Roman Commonwealth at each successive stage of its development and its decline. The State and the people, their component elements and their reciprocal influence—are always in the foreground; not what the Romans did, but what they were, is the principal object of inquiry. In other words, the narrative of events is subordinated to the exposition of causes and results. Military operations are more succinctly related than in any work of equal length on the same subject, while institutions, laws, ideas, manners, arts, commerce, agriculture, and kindred matters, are illustrated by all the resources which classical literature and critical study can afford. Thus we have, for example, a vivid delineation of the faith of the ancient Romans, with its peculiar narrowness of conception and at the same time its deeply-rooted earnestness; its rigid and stationary character; its inability to excite that mysterious awe for which the human heart has always a longing; its indifference to ideal elements accompanied by a practical and utilitarian tendency; the profound moral impulse which lay at its base; its lack of artistic beauty and of profound speculation; its consequent tendency to sink into insipidity and dullness, into an anxious and dreary round of ceremonies. The striking contrast which it thus presented to the religious ideas and systems of the Greeks is ascribed by Dr. Mommsen to "the fact that Latium did not, and that Hellas did, during the season of growth, come into contact with the East. No people on earth was great enough by its own efforts," he remarks, "to create either the marvel of Hellenic, or at a later period, the marvel of Christian culture; history has produced these most brilliant results only where the ideas of Aryan religion have sunk into an Indo-Germanic soil. But if for this reason Hellas is the prototype of purely human, Latium is not less for all time the prototype of national development."

Unlike Niebuhr and German investigators in general, Mommsen gives us the results of research without the process, never entangles us in a maze of details, and always writes in a terse and vigorous style. Many of his judgments and conjectures are open to question, and may hereafter be set aside; but at the present stage of our knowledge of antiquity his work is indispensable to the student, and invaluable to all who wish to have the latest results of scholarship applied to Roman history in a compact, intelligible, and interesting form.

The Life of Rossini, by H. S. THURBERG EDWARDS (Oliver Ditson & Co.), is an intelligent history of the public career of the great Italian composer, and an appreciative review of his place in musical annals. Mr. Edwards apparently has not enjoyed the advantages of personal familiarity with his subject, or access to peculiar sources of information which would qualify him to write a genuine biography. He tells us little of the private life and character of Rossini, but whatever he has attempted to do has done well, and many of the anecdote which he has collected respecting the life of the great master are well worth reading.

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